



## NATIONAL TROOPERS COALITION

---

Casey Perry, *Chairman*  
2099 Ironwood Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54304-1972  
Office/Fax: 800-232-1392  
Cell: 920-360-3612  
cperry@new.rr.com

Brad Card, *Legislative Liaison*  
412 First Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Office: 202-484-4884  
Fax: 202-484-0109  
Cell: 202-549-6120  
brad.card@dutkogroup.com

Michael F. Canning, *Director*  
Government Relations Office  
12 Francis Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Office: 410-269-4237  
Cell: 410-370-9800  
Fax: 410-269-7523  
ntc@maniscanning.com

**U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee On Homeland Security  
Subcommittee On Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology  
The State of Interoperable Communications: Perspectives From The Field**

Good morning Chairman Reichert, Ranking Member Pascrell and distinguished Committee Members. I am Casey Perry, Chairman of the National Troopers Coalition (NTC), representing our nation's state troopers. It is both an honor and a privilege to appear before this committee today in order to testify on state troopers' thoughts, ideas, and concerns. I will share with you our experiences as users from the field who provide service and security to our citizens.

To begin, I would like to thank our Members of Congress for their support of the Department of Homeland Security. I served three years in the U.S. Army and the past 27 years as a Wisconsin State Trooper. Throughout my career I have consistently confronted obstacles in cooperation and trust between the various layers of government and disciplines of emergency services. I am pleased to report, however, that since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security we have made great strides in both trust-building and information sharing.

During the past few years I have attended various programs and conferences hosted by the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and the Office of Justice Assistance. My experience has been that as the delegates debate potential solutions to address the problems we face, the age-old barriers continue between states, counties, and municipal rights, as well as with the discipline areas of emergency medical service, fire, law enforcement, and emergency government. Each entity resists losing their share of control. This is the underlying root of the problems we face today. We cannot address communication interoperability without first addressing the problems in the current power structure or we will continue to waste our tax dollars. The government, in serving as a parental figure, has told the children to be nice to their brother and sister but has failed as a parent in gaining compliance. The parent now needs to withhold its children's allowance (or in this case federal grant money) until they learn to cooperate with each other.

We need to overcome the political issues across our jurisdictions to build a communication platform that will serve each partner equally. The cost of building such a platform is not a one-time investment but one that will require an ongoing investment. Therefore, federal grant money needs to come with strings attached. States must be held accountable for creating a communications network – that is a dedicated channel and/or shared channel capability for EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Government – which will serve their entire state, allowing county and municipal governments full access. States redistributing federal grant money to county and municipal governments

must ensure that the money is spent on compatible equipment and software to interface with the statewide platform.

The lack of common standards among venders continues to present difficulties of interconnection. If venders of equipment and software receive tax-supported dollars from states, counties, or municipal governments, they must be held accountable so that their products will create optimal technologies compatible with other venders' systems.

Being on the front line so to speak, troopers and other law enforcement officers throughout our nation rely on communications each and every day. Agencies must provide equipment that will allow our law enforcement officers to communicate with one another as well as the other disciplines of EMS, Fire, and Emergency Government.

As communication equipment users, we count on other law enforcement jurisdictions, EMS, and Fire several times a day during the regular course of duty. If we address the issue of interoperability at the basic level here, on the front lines, during these daily occurrences, we will have addressed a number of issues regarding localized emergency response: services involving multiple intra-jurisdictions; planned events including athletic events, conferences, and conventions; and regional incident management of natural and man-made disasters.

In closing, it is my assessment that currently federal tax-dollars are not being allocated, managed, or spent efficiently. Furthermore, there are no mechanisms in place to ensure

accountability. Therefore, the lack of such coordination among our federal programs creates confusion and duplication of equipment and software that end-users contend with on a daily basis.

I would be happy to answer any of your questions or to provide personal experiences related to my testimony.